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ABSTRACT

This paper describes three outreach programs implemented by the Counseling and Development Center (CDC) at Utah's Brigham Young University (BYU) to better serve the academic needs of freshmen. The first program is a cooperative program with the BYU Housing Department aimed at facilitating adjustment to college and personal development of students living in on-campus housing. A course bearing one hour of academic credit is offered through the Heritage Developmental Community (HDC) project which provides students with experiential learning activities. The HDC students tended to receive higher semester grade point averages when compared to the general freshman population and a sample of freshman females who did not participate in HDC. The second outreach program was a pilot program for an academic peer assistance program. The program consisted of recruiting and training students to be peer assistants, and offering their services to students placed on academic warning. The program will become a valuable asset for students with academic concerns as the program is refined and the needs of the students are better identified. The third outreach program was a pilot program designed to be administered to all new transfer and freshman football players. The program consisted of academic and vocational testing and a follow-up interview. The major problem with the program was the difficulty in getting students who needed additional testing because of possible learning problems to return for follow-up counseling. (LLL)

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The Freshman Student and Academic Success: A Counseling Center's Approach

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The Freshman Student and Academic Success: A Counseling Center's Response

There is a growing awareness of the importance of the freshman year and the need for improved university programs to assist freshmen. Upcraft and Gardner (1989) have recently argued that a student's success in college is largely dependent on the freshman year. In giving a definition of freshman success, these authors point out that: "First and foremost, freshmen must succeed academically and intellectually. Ask freshmen what they fear most about going to college and most will say, 'Flunking out.'" (p.2) As if the "normal" challenges of being a freshman were not enough, some students enter college "at risk" because of a mismatch between their academic preparation and the academic environment at the university. Levitz and Noel (1989) have pointed out through research, dating back to the mid-1970s and continuing to the present time, that about one-third of the freshmen who enter college or university are not at that same institution the following year. In terms of freshmen dropping out during a term, these researchers have found that the first two to six weeks in the term are a critical period of time to help the new students adjust to college life. The importance of the first semester experiences of the entering freshman is indeed great.

The Counseling and Development Center (CDC), a department of Student Life, at Brigham Young University (BYU) has developed a number of programs to help freshmen succeed. BYU, with a total enrollment of 27,000, admits about 4,500 new freshmen each fall. Of this number about 500 freshmen are considered at-risk of failure based on their high school GPA being below 2.70 or their American College Testing exam composite score being below 17 (Call, Hendricks, and Jones (1990). The University makes a large investment in each new freshman student and is most concerned that they each have a successful academic and developmental experience. This paper will focus on three programs that are being used at BYU to increase the academic success rate of its freshmen students.

An expanded role for the university counseling center in the 1990s has recently been considered by Bishop (1990). Bishop points out that as early as 1970 there has been a call for an expanded role to be played by the counseling center (Oetting, Ivey, & Weigel, 1970). This expanded role would move the counseling center away from its traditional focus on one-to-one counseling. Instead, counseling centers would become more involved in the personal development of students through a wide range of services including outreach programs. Bishop has identified a number of institutional concerns where the counseling center can be of assistance to students. Among the areas where counseling can serve institutional needs are: personal counseling, crisis intervention, career counseling, help with special student populations, and the retention of students. It is this final area of student retention and academic performance that has been targeted as an area of emphasis by the BYU Counseling and Development Center.

Along with what may be considered traditional services of a counseling center such as personal counseling, career counseling, and crisis intervention, we have developed programs and services that attempt to meet students' needs related to academic success. This approach recognizes the fact that students come to college first and foremost to pursue academic goals. The Academic Support Office within CDC provides academic counseling and other assistance to students experiencing difficulties with their studies. However, there has been a growing awareness of the need for preventative outreach programs which join the resources of CDC with other campus agencies in order to further facilitate student academic success, especially among entering freshmen. This paper will describe three outreach programs implemented by CDC to better serve the academic needs of BYU freshmen. Counseling Center programs with Housing, Student Government, and the Athletic department will be presented. Evaluative data which reflect the effectiveness of each program will also be presented.

Heritage Developmental Community

For the past six years the CDC has been involved in a cooperative program with the BYU Housing Department aimed at facilitating the adjustment to college and the personal development and wellness of students living in on-campus housing. Since the University cannot compete well with the amenities offered by off-campus apartments such as hot-tubs, cable-tv, and plush living rooms, the goal of this project, called the Heritage Developmental Community (HDC), has been to offer "academic amenities" to students living on campus. This has been done through efforts to create an environment and teach a number of credit classes that help insure students get off to a good start in college. The goals of HDC are shown in Table 1. In a recent review article Isakson, Lawson, and MacArthur (1987) have presented a rationale and supporting evidence for using the college curriculum to facilitate student development. A course bearing one hour of academic credit is offered through the HDC project and taught jointly by counseling and housing staff members, to the residents of the Heritage Hall housing complex. It provides students with experiential learning activities to assist them in, among other things, relating well with roommates, managing their time, reducing stress, managing personal wellness, and caring for and serving others. A listing of lesson topics for the 1988-89 year is presented in Table 2. A more complete description of the Heritage Developmental Community project is found in Isakson, Hoover, and Heaps (1988). This project is located in a housing complex of 1500 residents where 70% of the residents are freshmen. Through on-going evaluations, data have been accumulated which indicate that the students perceive the program as beneficial to their personal development and adjustment to college.

The HDC project was not originally planned as an intervention aimed solely at enhancing students' academic achievement. However, one might reason that if students participating in HDC are being facilitated in their development, personal wellness, and overall adjustment to college, there might be a beneficial effect from participation in the program on their academic performance.

To understand the possible impact of HDC on students' academic performance, some basic information about the HDC participants is needed. Of the 474 students who have enrolled in the HDC class since Fall 1986, 82.7% have been freshmen. Among the 392 freshmen participants, 319 are female. It should be noted that female students comprise approximately 80% of the residents in the Heritage Halls complex. Overall, female freshmen account for 67.30% of the participants in HDC since Fall 1986.

What type of student is choosing to become involved in HDC, beside the high percentage of female freshmen? In terms of academic readiness, about 8.5% of the HDC freshman participants fall into the at-risk category, compared to about 7% of the total BYU freshman class that meets the at-risk criteria. Thus, HDC is not attracting only academically strong students but rather is being chosen by a group who have a higher percentage of high risk students than the general BYU freshman class. This point is further established by observing the number of students who finish their first semester in academic difficulty. Since Fall 1986, 11.60% of HDC students have completed Fall semester with a GPA below 2.00. Among freshman HDC students, 11.99% finished the semester below 2.00. The percentage of all BYU freshmen who have a GPA below 2.00 at the end of their first Fall semester is about 15%. Therefore, the HDC program attracts a higher percentage of students who are at academic risk than are found in the general BYU freshman class but a lower per cent of the HDC group finishes their first Fall semester below a 2.00 GPA.

Table 1
Goals of the Heritage Developmental Community

1. Student involvement and citizenship
2. Balanced student development
3. Student wellness
   - Occupational
   - Academic
   - Physical
   - Spiritual
   - Emotional
   - Social/Relational
   - Intellectual
4. Student satisfaction with campus living
5. Heritage staff involvement
6. Cooperative interaction between counseling and housing personnel

Table 2
HDC Course Topics

Fall Semester	Winter Semester
Welcome to Your Community	Reintroduction to Wholeness the Wheel
Wholeness & Balanced Development	Time Management
Emotional Autonomy	Stress Management
Interdependence	Stress- What to Do with It
Community Relations and Group Relations	Physical Well-being
Developing Relationships	Self-Esteem
Communicating Effectively and Managing Emotions	Spiritual Development
Assertiveness	Values- What Do You Stand For?
Managing Conflict	Decision Making
Self Assessment	Life Planning and Goal Setting
	Career Information

In order to more fully assess the possible impact of the HDC experience on the academic performance of participating students, a number of comparisons have been made. First, HDC participants from Fall 1986 through Fall 1989 were compared with all BYU freshmen for the respective years. These results are found in Chart I. In order to account for some variables that could affect GPA at the end of Fall semester, the number of credit hours taken, the high school GPA of the students, and the ACT composite scores were compared between the HDC group and the BYU freshman means. During the 1897, 1988, and 1989 Fall semesters, the composite ACT scores of the HDC students were significantly lower than that of the general freshman population. It was also found that the high school GPA of the HDC participants were not significantly different from the BYU freshman population except for the Fall 1988 group. From these data it appears that the HDC students were slightly less prepared academically than the general BYU freshman population. On the other hand, the HDC students tended to take more hours of credit during the fall semester than did the BYU freshman. Data were not available on ACT or high school GPA for the general freshman population distributed by sex. Therefore, it could not be determined if the lack of academic preparation in the HDC group was related to gender differences or to other factors.

The major differences observed between HDC students and the general freshman population were in the area of academic performance. The HDC students took more credit hours in Fall semester and received a higher semester GPA, except for Fall 1986, than the general freshman population. The GPA differences were significant for Fall 1988 and approached significance for Fall 1989.

Since there was such a large proportion of the HDC students that were female, the evaluation of the impact of HDC on academic performance next looked at a breakdown by gender. (See Chart II.) When male HDC participants were compared with the mean BYU freshman GPA at the end of Fall semester, there were no significant differences between the groups. The female HDC students were also compared to the general BYU female freshman population. From this comparison it was found that the HDC female students had significantly higher Fall semester GPAs for 1988 and 1989 compared to the general female freshman population.

In order to further explore the effects of HDC on academic performance, a comparison was made between the female freshman HDC students and a randomly drawn sample of female freshman residents in Heritage Halls who did not take the HDC class for the 1988 and 1989 Fall semesters combined. This was done in an effort to control for the effects of students having chosen to live on-campus in Heritage Halls. The results of this comparison are found in Chart III. There were no differences between the HDC female freshmen and the Heritage Halls freshman sample in terms of hours taken, ACT Composite, or high school GPA. However, Fall semester GPAs were different: the HDC females had a mean Fall GPA of 2.94 compared to 2.82 for the Heritage Halls sample. This difference approached significance ($p<.08$).

The final question raised in the evaluation of the HDC project's impact on academic performance was whether at-risk students would perform better academically when they took HDC their first Fall semester compared to the sample of Heritage Halls at-risk students who did not participate in HDC. The results of this comparison are found in Chart IV. Again, there were no significant differences between the HDC at-risk students and the sample of at-risk Heritage Halls freshmen females on hours taken, ACT Composite, or high school GPA. In the area of Fall semester GPA, however, the HDC students' mean was 2.44 compared to 2.03 for the Heritage sample. This difference approached significance ($p<.11$). Perhaps more important is the practical difference for at-risk freshman of a mean GPA (2.44) that represents acceptable academic performance at the end of their first semester in college compared to a mean GPA (2.03) that could spell academic problems for that group of entering freshmen.

Conclusions

Taken together these findings suggest that HDC may be having a facilitative effect on students' academic performance during their first semester in college. Without greater academic preparation, the HDC students in their first semester tend to receive higher semester GPA's, especially in the case of female students compared to the general freshman population and a sample of Heritage Halls freshmen females who did not participate in HDC. This same pattern was found for the at-risk female freshmen who took the HDC class their first fall semester.

The findings of the evaluation of academic impact related to HDC involvement are particularly timely in light of the current attention being paid to the college freshman experience and to the emphasis that BYU Housing has placed on providing academic advantages to students living in on-campus residence halls. A recent study by Call, Hendricks, and Jones (1990) sheds some light on why HDC might be found to be beneficial to students' academic success. In studying successful and high risk freshmen at BYU, these researchers found a number of characteristics, using the Omnibus Personality Inventory, that differentiate between the two types of students. Some of these differences are as follows. Successful students are more conventional in social activities, reactions, and feeling. They also want to make more favorable impressions on others than do the unsuccessful students. Successful students tend to be more trusting and more ethical in dealings with others. Fewer behaviors and attitudes that lead to social alienation or emotional disturbance are seen in the successful students and they also have stronger commitments to religious beliefs and practices. Successful students also experience less anxiety and nervousness from social interactions and have higher opinions of themselves than unsuccessful students. This view is supported by Maxwell (1979) who has found that high risk college students who succeed have made a better adaptation to the college environment, have more clearly defined aspirations, are more committed to their goals, are willing to study hard, and have better interpersonal skills and support. The HDC curriculum and class experiences are aimed at facilitating student growth and adjustment to college in many of the characteristics that have been identified in successful students.

Chart I
Heritage Community
Differecncs in Mean Scores
Betweem Heritage and Other BYU
Freshman Students

	Hert. GPA	Hert. No.	Fresh GPA	Fresh No.	Mean Dif.	t-value	Prob>|T|
GPA							
Fall 1986	2.62	36	2.66	8091	-0.04	-0.322	0.30
Fall 1987	2.80	66	2.70	8150	0.10	0.940	0.10
Fall 1988	2.97	117	2.73	8463	0.24	3.922	0.01
Fall 1989	2.90	163	2.81	8290	0.09	1.579	0.10
Hours							
Fall 1986	13.3	36	13.2	8091	0.10	0.195	0.50
Fall 1987	13.7	66	13.2	8150	0.50	1.705	0.05
Fall 1988	13.7	117	13.6	8463	0.10	0.6223	0.20
Fall 1989	14.1	163	13.5	8290	0.60	3.854	0.01
HSGPA							
Fall 1986	3.31	36	3.34	8091	-0.03	-0.386	0.30
Fall 1987	3.45	66	3.39	8150	0.06	1.295	0.10
Fall 1988	3.48	117	3.37	8463	0.11	2.965	0.01
Fall 1989	3.46	163	3.43	8290	0.03	0.486	0.30
ACT Comp							
Fall 1986	23.8	36	23.7	8091	0.10	0.169	0.50
Fall 1987	22.8	66	24.2	8150	-1.40	-2.637	0.01
Fall 1988	23.0	117	24.2	8463	-1.20	-2.871	0.01
Fall 1989	23.4	163	24.8	8290	-1.40	-4.963	0.01

Chart II
Heritage Community
Male/Female Comparision
Between Heritage Project Students
and BYU Freshmen Students

	Males				Females				Total			
	Hert.		BYU		Hert.		BYU		Hert.		BYU	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Fall 1986	10	27.8	3584	44.3	26	72.2	4507	55.7	36	9.4	8091	24.5
Fall 1987	16	24.2	3674	45.1	50	75.8	4476	54.9	66	17.3	8150	19.8
Fall 1988	19	16.2	3666	43.3	98	83.8	4797	56.7	117	30.6	8463	20.5
Fall 1989	21	12.9	3555	42.9	142	87.1	4777	57.6	163	42.7	8332	20.2
Total	66	17.3	14479	43.8	316	82.7	18557	56.2	382		33036	

GPA Comparision

	Hert.		Fresh.		Mean		
Females	No.	GPA	No.	GPA	Dif.	t-Value	Prob>|T|
Fall 1986	26	2.61	4507	2.65	-0.04	-0.30	0.30
Fall 1987	50	2.75	4476	2.68	0.07	0.53	0.20
Fall 1988	98	2.98	4797	2.72	0.26	4.26	0.01
Fall 1989	142	2.91	4777	2.77	0.14	2.41	0.01
Total	316	2.88					
Males							
Fall 1986	10	2.64	3584	2.67	-0.03	-0.10	0.40
Fall 1987	16	2.94	3674	2.73	0.21	1.35	0.10
Fall 1988	19	2.92	3666	2.76	0.16	0.74	0.20
Fall 1989	21	2.83	3555	2.87	-0.04	-0.19	0.40
Total	66	2.85					

Chart III
Heritage Developmental Community
Comparison Between HDC and Other Heritage
Freshman Females
(Combined Fall 1988 and Fall 1989)

	HDC N=204	Hert. N=219	Mean Dif.	t-Value	Prob>|T|	Sig.	Eq. Var.
Semester Hours	14.00	13.75	0.25	1.22	0.2274	No	Yes
Semester GPA	2.94	2.82	0.12	1.77	0.0774	No	No
ACT Composite	22.96	22.95	0.01	0.01	0.9969	No	No
High School GPA	3.46	3.46	0.00	0.04	0.9684	No	Yes

Chart VI
Heritage Developmental Community
Comparison Between HDC and Other Heritage
Freshman Females High Risk Students
(Combined Fall 1988 and Fall 1989)

	HDC N=17	Hert. N=23	Mean Dif.	t-Value	Prob>|T|	Sig.	Eq. Var.
Semester Hours	13.29	12.50	0.79	1.04	0.3051	No	No
Semester GPA	2.44	2.03	0.41	1.68	0.1016	No	Yes
ACT Composite	16.94	16.09	0.85	1.00	0.3234	No	Yes
High School GPA	3.00	2.92	0.08	0.62	0.5397	No	Yes

Academic Peer Assistance Program

Previous research (Call, Hendricks, & Jones, 1989) has indicated that the more successful students have been able to find an academic identity and feel a part of the institution more quickly. At the end of each Fall semester at BYU there are about 2,200 students who have been placed on academic warning because they received less than a 2.0 semester GPA. The Academic Support Office does not have the counseling resources to visit with each warning student, therefore, we have attempted to develop other ways of meeting the academic support needs of this group. For a number of years the University has used upper class students to help new students adjust to the university environment as part of our preschool orientation program. As a result of the success of this program, three years ago the BYU Student Service Association (BYUSA) leaders proposed that volunteer peer assistants be trained to assist students who were experiencing academic difficulties.

Pilot Program

The Academic Support Office was asked to help coordinate this Academic Peer Assistance program. After meeting with the BYUSA leaders, it was decided to conduct a pilot program during Winter semester 1989. This program consisted of recruiting students desiring to be peer assistants; training the assistants; offering students who were placed on academic warning after Fall semester 1988 the services of a peer assistant, and coordinating the peer assistants contact with the warning students. The recruiting of the peer assistants took place during Fall semester 1988. BYUSA leaders recruited sophomores, juniors or seniors who had a cumulative GPA of at least a 2.7. There were about 50 students who signed up during Fall semester 1988. The peer assistants received training from the academic support counselors in study skills, time management and a review of the academic resources in the University community. Academic support counselors met with the peer assistants for three two-hour training sessions. Upon completion of the training each peer assistant was assigned an academic support counselor as a mentor.

Each student who was placed on warning after Fall semester 1988 was sent a letter explaining the Academic Peer Assistance program and a stamped referral card inviting them to send back the card to receive assistance from a academic peer assistant. On the referral card the student indicated the type of help they desired (study skills, time management, etc). After receiving the referral card from the warning student, BYUSA assigned a peer assistant to call the student and set up a time to visit.

There were 31 warning students who visited with peer assistants during Winter semester 1989. Peer assistants actually made contact with sixteen warning students during Winter semester 1989. Of those students who visited with the peer assistant, 62.5% received a Winter semester GPA of at least 2.0.

The evaluation of this pilot study indicated that those students who saw an academic peer assistant were not significantly more successful than those who did not seek help. After evaluating this pilot program there were at least four important questions that were asked: What program changes need to be made? Why did not more warning students respond to the invitation for help? What are the academic needs of the warning students? What factors contributed to the warning student's success?

Peer Assistant Program Fall/Winter 1989/90

There were three main flaws in the Academic Peer Assistant pilot program. First, the program was being administered by students without close coordination with the academic support counselors. There was no line responsibility or accountability between the student leaders, peer assistants, and the academic support counselors. Because of this many peer assistants did not receive the encouragement and instruction necessary to be successful. Second, the system of telephoning the warning student needed to be refined to reduce the time between when the student sent in the referral card and when the initial contact was made by the peer assistant. Third, more information was required concerning the academic needs of the warning students to better match it to the skill levels of the peer assistants.

During Fall semester 1989 there were 53 peer assistants who completed the training program. An academic support counselor was assigned as the Academic Peer Assistant program coordinator. The peer assistants were encouraged to enroll in a class that was created to assist the peer assistants and to teach

them other important principles which would help them better serve the students. There were 159 referral cards received from warning students after Fall semester 1989. Ninety of these students received peer assistance. There were 69 students who requested peer assistance and did not receive assistance for the following reasons: 1. Eighteen were contacted by phone but declined the peer assistance; 2. There were attempts made to contact 12 students by phone without success; and 3. For thirty nine students no attempts were made by a peer assistant made to contact them.

After further evaluation of the 159 returned referral cards, it was found that there were only 94 students who were actually warning students from Fall semester 1989. The other 65 students were from other semesters or they were not on warning after Fall semester. Fifty one of these students received peer assistance. Of those who received assistance, 56.9% received at least a 2.0 GPA for Winter semester 1990. An additional 43 warning students received assistance from an academic support counselor. From this group, 60.5% received at least a 2.0 GPA for Winter semester 1990. (See Chart I)

Upon the completion of Fall semester 1989, there were 2,171 students placed on warning and 1890 of these students were enrolled for Winter semester. Only 137 of these student requested any assistance from a academic peer assistant or an academic support counselor. Considering the total number of warning students enrolled for Winter semester 1990, 63.1% received at least a 2.0 GPA for Winter semester.

During Fall semester 1989 there were 9973 freshman enrolled at the University. Of this group of freshman, 584 were placed on warning after the semester and 53.9% of those freshman warning students received at least a 2.0 GPA for Winter semester 1990 (see chart II). There were 26 freshman warning students who made contact with a peer assistant and 30 who were seen by a academic support counselor. Of those freshman warning students who were seen by a peer assistant or a academic support counselor, 53.6% received at least a 2.0 GPA for Winter semester 1990. In addition 19 freshman warning students requested peer assistance but didn't meet with a peer assistant. There were 52.6% of these students that received at least a 2.0 GPA for Winter semester.

In order to compare freshmen warning students who came in for assistance and those who did not make contact, a sample of freshman warning students who did not make contact was selected and compared to those who received assistance. The following differences were observed: (See Chart III)

1. On an average, about 13% of the freshman students on warning are considered high risk students at the time of acceptance because of lower ACT/high school GPA scores. Those who made contact with a peer assistant or academic support counselor were less prepared academically than those who did not make contact. Those who made contact had significantly lower ACT scores (English, Natural Science, Composite scores at least a .05 level) and lower high school GPA's.

2. Those warning students who made contact with a peer assistant or academic support counselor made more academic progress than those who did not make contact. Both groups improved from their Fall semester GPA's after Winter semester, but those students who contacted a peer assistant or a academic support counselor had a lower mean GPA Fall semester and a higher Winter GPA than did those student who did not make contact, thereby showing a greater amount of improvement.

3. Female freshman students were more likely to seek help from a peer assistant than from a academic support counselor. (See Chart IV)

Conclusion

The Academic Peer Assistance program at BYU will become a valuable asset for students with academic concerns as the program is refined and the needs of the students are better identified. This program is a student service program directed by the students and coordinated by the Counseling and Development Center. The success of this program has experienced so far seems to be that those students at highest risk need many different avenues of resources available to them before they will seek help early in their university experience. The student's personal preparation, development and internal motivation

will, in the long run, have a large influence in the determination of the student's success. After an evaluation of the Peer Assistance Program there are some major questions that need to be asked:

1. Can student's effectively serve as academic peer assistancs?

2. What type of academic interventions are most effective with warning students?

3. Are the academic problems of freshman transitional developmental concerns or intellectual concerns?

Hopefully, over the next few years we can answer these and other questions to refine the Academic Peer Assistance program at BYU.

Chart I
Academic Support Comparison
Fall 1989 Warning Students
Who Requested Assistance for Winter 1990

	Winter 1990 GPA > 1.99		High Risk		Female		Male		Total Fall Warn.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No Contact but Requested Peer	24	55.8	16	37.2	22	51.2	21	48.8	43	31.4
Peer Assistance	29	56.9	14	27.5	33	64.7	18	35.3	51	37.2
Counselor	26	60.5	15	34.9	24	55.8	19	44.2	43	31.4
Sub. Total	79	57.7	45	32.8	79	57.7	58	43.3	137	7.2
Total Warning	1192	63.1							1890	

Chart II
Freshman Warning Student's
Performance Comparison:
Winter Semester GPA After Fall Warning
Separated by Type
Winter 1990

	Those Who Received Above 1.99 Semester GPA		Those Who Received Less Than 2.00 Semester GPA		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Requested No Assistance	275	54.0	234	46.0	509	87.2
Requested Peer Assist. but Didn't Receive Assistance	10	52.6	9	47.4	19	3.3
Received Peer Assistance	14	53.8	12	46.2	26	4.5
Received Counselor Assistance	16	53.3	14	46.7	30	5.1
Total Warning	315	53.9	269	46.1	584	

Chart III
Differences Between Freshman Warning
Students Who Saw an Advisor (Peer or Counselor)
and Those Who didn't Fall 1989

	Sample No Contact Mean N=170	Advised Mean N=56	Dif.	t-Value	Prob>|T|	Sig.
Fall 1989						
GPA	1.50	1.43	-0.07	0.84	0.40	NO
Hours	12.61	13.15	0.54	-1.44	0.15	NO
Winter 1990						
GPA	1.88	1.99	0.11	-0.74	0.46	NO
Hours	12.54	12.42	-0.12	0.27	0.79	NO
ACT Scores						
English	22.06	20.95	-1.11	2.15	0.03	YES
Math	21.89	20.96	-0.93	1.10	0.27	NO
Soc. Sc.	21.86	20.54	-1.32	1.50	0.13	NO
Nat. Sc.	25.36	23.79	-1.57	2.10	0.04	YES
Comp.	22.90	21.57	-1.33	2.24	0.03	YES
High School						
GPA	3.20	3.07	-0.13	2.26	0.03	YES

Chart IV
Freshman Warning Student's
Propensity to Seek Assistance
After Invitation
Separated by Gender
Winter 1990

	Females		Males		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Requested Peer Assist. but Didn't Receive Assist.	13	68.4	6	31.6	19	25.3
Received Peer Assistance	17	65.4	9	34.5	26	34.7
Received Counselor Assistance	14	46.7	16	53.3	30	40.0
Total	44	58.7	31	41.3	75	
Total BYU Freshman	5647	56.6	4326	43.4	9973	

Athlete Assessment Program

The student athlete is often considered a high risk student academically often because of the difficulty in juggling their time between the sport and the academic experience (Jordan and Denson, 1990). Other researchers (Pearson and Petitpas, 1990) have indicated that the student athlete faces many situational transitions that effect his ability to perform academically up to their potential. During the Summer of 1989 the Athletic Director at Brigham Young University approached the Counseling and Development Center (CDC) about the possibility of putting together a program that would assist new freshman and first semester transfer football players to perform academically at a higher level. The Academic Support Office of CDC wrote a proposal for the development of a academic support team to develop a program to assist our student athletes.

Pilot Program

After approval from the Dean of Student Life and the Athletic Director, an academic support team was established consisting of the student athletic advisor, an assistant football coach, a academic support counselor and a psychologist from CDC. A pilot program was designed to be administered to all new transfer and freshman football players Fall semester 1989. Upon completion of Fall semester 1989, the program was to be evaluated and, if successful, be expanded to all sports.

The pilot program consisted of three stages. During the first stage, the high school GPA and ACT scores were evaluated by the athletic advisor and the academic support counselor to determine the student's basic level of academic preparation. In the second stage was for the academic support counselor and psychologist administered a battery of tests to each student to determine the student's academic abilities, personal fit in the university environment, and career interests. The Computerized Placement Tests (CPTS) were given to determine the student's academic preformance level in reading comperhension, sentence skills, arithmetic, and elementary algebra. The Omnibus Personality Inventory (OPI) was given to determine the student's fit in the academic environment. Our previous research with the OPI (Call, Hendricks, & Jones,1990) has established what we considered to be some strong characteristics of successful high risk students (See Insert I Overview for the OPI). The Strong Interest Inventory (SII) was used to help identify areas of career interests. For the pilot program the WAIS-R and Woodcock/Johnson were also administered to determine the student's academic strengths and weaknesses.

The third stage of the pilot program called on the academic support counselor to conduct an interview with each student and share the information that had been gained from the assessment tests. Clearance for sharing confidential information was obtained from each student and then the information was provided to the athletic advisor and coaches. With this information the athletic academic support team worked to individualize an academic support system for each student athlete (mentors, tutors, etc.).

There were nine new football players Fall semester 1989 who were involved in this pilot program. Seven of these students were academically high risk students because they had an ACT composite (COMP) score below 17 or High School Grade Point Average (HSGPA) below 2.71 . It was extremely difficult to complete the testing on these students after the semester had begun and many of them did not complete all the tests until near the end of the semester. Because of the lack of completion and other problems, individualized interventions to be implimented did not happen for most of the students. Five of the nine students received a Fall semester GPA below a 2.00 and only one received below a 2.00 GPA for Winter semester. From the pilot program it was learned that the assessment must take place early in the student's first enrollment and that interventions needed to be supported by the coaches.

Athlete Assessment Program Fall 1990

Based on what was learned about the Athletic Program and the student athletes, some program modifications were recommended and an Athlete Assessment Program was proposed. The Athletic Academic Advicement center and CDC worked together as an academic support team to refine the program. The program consisted of the following:

1. The Academic Support Office administered tests that screened each student as to their basic intelligence (Wonderlic), academic fit in the university environment (OPI), and the career interests (SII).

2. Based on the student's high school GPA/ACT data and information obtained from the assessment tests, an academic support counselor visited with each student and reviewed academic strengths/weaknesses, personality characteristic, and career interests. Clearance was obtained from each student so that this information could be shared with the Athletic Academic Advisement Center.

3. The academic support counselor and psychologist reviewed the above data and discussed possible interventions, i.e. those that may need additional testing, tutoring, etc. The academic support counselor wrote an assessment summary on each student addressing strengths/ weaknesses and recommendations.

4. The academic support counselor and psychologist met with the athletic advisors and discussed the assessment summary for each student athlete and interventions were jointly established. These first four stages were to be completed before the end of the third week of Fall semester.

5. The Athletic Academic Advisement Center developed a series of workshops for the student athletes that provided help concerning some of the general weaknesses of the student athletes (time management, basic study skills, chosing a major, stress management, etc.). CDC personnel were used to teach the workshops.

There were twenty new football players that completed the assessment program during Fall semester 1990. Fifteen of these students received at least a 2.0 semester GPA. Six of these twenty student athletes had been designated high risk students because of low ACT/high school GPA scores.

The major problem with the program was the difficultity in getting those student's who needed additional testing because of possible learning problems to come back in. There were nine students who needed additional testing and only three responded.

Profile of the Student Athlete

Based on information received from ACT scores, high school GPA's and assessment test data we have been able to make the following assumptions about male freshman student athletes compared to other male freshman:

1. Freshman athletes are generally less prepared academically than other freshman based on the ACT scores and high school GPA's. (See Chart I)

2. Academically high risk freshman athletes generally improve their first semester GPA's more consistently during their second semester than do the non-high risk freshman athletes. (See Chart II)

3. Male freshman athletes generally take more credit hours their first semester and have less variation in their semester GPA's than do other freshman students. (See Chart III)

4. Personality diffenences: Male freshman athletes were less tied to religious beliefs, more self-centered, showed less appreciation for the arts, were more masculine, less interested in other academic activities, and more impulsive than were other male freshman. (See Chart III)

Conclusions

Based on the success of the Athlete Assessment Program there are three basic conclusions that support a positive future for the program. First, the program has networked two areas of the University with a common cause of assisting students towards academic success and the combined resources of both areas brings greater strength to the program. Second, from this assessment program we have been able to learn more about the freshman student population, especiallyy the freshman athlete, and from this understanding additional programs can be implimented to help student in general. Finally, this program has helped to establish an assessment protocal to be used in assisting other students who may have academic concerns. More work is needed in this area to increase the understanding of the coaches so that the student athletes can be assessed earlier in the first semester.

Insert I - Overview of the OPI

OPI-Interp.
K.S. Hendricks
Time: 1 1/2 - 2 hrs.

Omnibus Personality Inventory (OPI)

General Content of the OPI

The OPI was constructed to assess selected attitudes, values, and interests. Almost all dimensions included in the inventory were chosen either for their particular relevance to academic activity or for their general importance in understanding and differentiating among students in an education context.

The scales allow assessment of the following areas:

Intellectual: Assessing interest in working with ideas and abstractions, theoretical orientation, esthetic interests and a stylistic measure of perception (referred to as complexity). Authors suggest that you look at the first four scales together. These are TI, TO, ES, CO.

Freedom to Learn: Two scales in this area assess autonomy, independence of thought and judgement, and religious orientation. Used together, these scales attempt to measure the complexity of the underlying concept of authoritarian vs. non-authoritarian thinking. (May have some relevance to development as perceived by Perry). The two scales are AU and RO.

Social: These scales taken together, give an assessment of the social factors which might be considered relevant to scholarly style and behavior. They include measures of social extroversion-introversion, impulsivity in terms of "psychic energy", psychological adjustment, and anxiety. The four scales for social are SE, IE, PI, and AL.

The remaining scales are not grouped but have relevance to the inventory by providing assessment of affiliation orientation, practical outlook, masculine-feminine interests and attitudes.

*It is important to note in summary of the overall formulation of the OPI that the instrument was conceived at an eclectic level which went through its own development and stages. Questions were asked about the individual as a changing, learning organism in the social and intellectual contexts of academic institutions. The major purpose of the instrument is to provide a differentiating description of students and to assess change in their development as they interact with the academic environment.

Brief descriptions of the fourteen scales

1. Thinking Introversion: (TI) High scores indicate a liking for reflective thought and academic activities. Interests in variety of areas. Low scorers tend to evaluate ideas on their practical application.

2. Theoretical Orientation: (TO) High scores indicate a preference for dealing with theory and using the scientific method of thinking and many have interests in sciences. Low scores indicate less interest in reading scientific or mathematical articles and a preference for shorter problem solving.

3. Estheticism: (ES) High scores show interests in artistic matters and indicate a high level of sensitivity to esthetic stimulation including literature and dramatics.

4. Complexity: (CO) Reflects an experimental and flexible orientation rather than a fixed way of viewing and organizing phenomena. High scorers are tolerant of ambiguities and uncertainties.

5. Autonomy: (AU) High scores show a tendency to be liberal and independent of authority while low scorers tend to be accepting of authority and the established order of things.

6. Religious Orientation: (RO) Higher scores indicate less religious orientation while lower scores indicate that a person has a stronger commitment to religious beliefs and practices.

7. Social Extroversion: (E) High scores show tendency toward involvement with people and social activities. Low scores indicate a preference to withdraw from social contacts and responsibilities.

8. Impulse Expression: (IE) High scorers have an active imagination, value sensual reactions and feelings; very high scores may indicate feelings of rebellion and aggressions. Low scorers might be more conventional.

9. Personal Integration: (PI) High scorers tend to have fewer attitudes and behaviors that indicate social alienation or emotional disturbance. Low scorers might intentionally avoid others and experience feelings of hostility or isolation, or rejection.

10. Anxiety Level: (AL) High scorers don't feel they have a lot of anxiety or nervousness. Low scorers may be experiencing some difficulty with tenseness and adjustments to their social environment, tend to have poor opinion of themselves.

11. Altruism: (AM) High scorers are affiliative persons and trusting and ethical in relations with others. Low scorers tend not to consider the feelings and welfare of others, are more impersonal and distant.

12. Practical Outlook: (PO) High scores indicate a practical, applied approach, tendency to value material possessions and concrete accomplishments. Low scorers find a greater appeal in ideas than in facts.

13. Masculinity-Femininity: (MF) High score masculine; low score feminine.

14. Response Bias: (RB) Represents an approach to assessing the student's test-taking attitude. Watch for really high scores - making a good impression; very low scores - trying to make a bad impression or indication of low state of wellbeing. Look for scores in the mid range as appropriate.

NOTE: The test seems to be a very good measure of several factors involved with the development of students while in an academic setting. It also seems to have been developed from a philosophy which is process oriented or change oriented in that it attempts to measure change as a student is exposed to the academic and social stimuli of university life.

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Chart I
Athlete Comparision

Mean Difference Between
Freshman Athletes and Sample of Freshman

	Fresh Samp. N=368	Fresh Athl. N=56	Diff.	t-value	Prob>|T|	Sig.
First Semester						
Hours	13.94	13.52	0.42	1.92	0.0586	No
GPA	2.81	2.73	0.08	0.84	0.4030	No
ACT Comp.	24.10	20.39	3.71	6.14	0.0001	Yes
HSGPA	3.42	3.27	0.15	2.16	0.0344	Yes

Academic Support Comparison
Freshman Sample and Freshman Athlete

	1st Sem. GPA > 1.99		High Risk		Female		Male		Tot.
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Freshman Sample (Fall 1987)	312	84.78	35	9.51	214	58.15	154	41.85	368
Freshman Athletes (Fall 1989)	51	91.07	20	35.71	27	48.21	29	51.79	56

Chart II
Athlete Comparision
Freshman Athletes

Mean Difference Between
High Risk and Non-High Risk
Fall 1989

		High Risk N=20	Non-High Risk N=37	Diff.	t-Value	Prob>|T|	Sig.
Fall 1989							
	Hours	12.85	13.64	-0.79	-1.72	0.0911	No
	GPA	2.38	2.92	-0.54	-3.71	0.0005	Yes
Winter 1990							
	Hours	12.95	13.61	-0.66	-2.10	0.0403	Yes
	GPA	2.46	2.78	-0.32	-1.87	0.0667	No

Chart III
Athlete Comparison
Differences Between Male Freshman Athletes
and Other Male Students Who Have Taken the
Omnibus Personality Inventory (OPI)
(Combined Fall 1988 and Fall 1989)

Variables	Fresh. Sample N=104	Fresh. Athl. N=45	Mean Diff.	t-Value	Prob>|T|	Sig.	Eq. Var.
Semester Hours	13.00	13.72	0.72	2.72	0.0075	Yes	No
Semester GPA	2.46	2.60	0.14	1.09	0.2790	No	No
ACT Composite	21.03	20.29	-0.74	-1.00	0.3193	No	Yes
High School GPA	3.09	3.02	-0.07	-0.79	0.4287	No	Yes
Religious Orientation	40.35	44.38	4.03	3.41	0.0008	Yes	Yes
Altruism	48.18	42.53	-5.65	-3.27	0.0013	Yes	Yes
Estheticism	47.36	42.96	-4.40	-2.77	0.0064	Yes	Yes
Masculinity/Femininity	52.16	53.64	1.48	1.96	0.0517	No	Yes
Thinking Introversion	43.18	40.67	-2.51	-1.70	0.0904	No	Yes
Impulse Expression	54.86	58.20	3.34	1.68	0.0959	No	Yes
Anxiety Level	46.54	49.27	2.73	1.65	0.1020	No	Yes
Social Extroversion	51.29	48.44	-2.85	-1.62	0.1085	No	Yes

Summary

The programs described illustrate the kinds of services that can be provided and the role the counseling center can play in helping to insure academic success of beginning college students, even those at-risk of failure. The programs are preventative in nature and demonstrate a broad range of delivery modes that can be used in helping new students make the transition to college. At BYU Counseling and Development Center there has been a concerted effort to meet the needs of new students. These programs demonstrate the academic benefits that can be derived from the leadership and innovation of a university counseling center.

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